

questions in both scenarios, and was scored for each. For the evolving scenario, candidates were provided with a 15-minute preparation period, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond. For the arriving scenario, a five-minute preparation period was given, and candidates had 10 minutes to respond.

The candidates' responses were scored on technical knowledge and oral communication ability. Prior to the administration of the exam, a panel of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) determined the scoring criteria, using generally approved fire command practices, firefighting practices, and reference materials. Scoring decisions were based on SME-approved possible courses of action (PCAs) including those actions that must be taken to resolve the situation as presented. Only those oral responses that depicted relevant behaviors that were observable and could be quantified were assessed in the scoring process.

Candidates were rated on a five-point scale, with 5 as the optimal response, 4 as a more than acceptable passing response, 3 as a minimally acceptable passing response, 2 as a less than acceptable response, and 1 as a much less than acceptable response. For each of the scenes, and for oral communication, the requirements for each score were defined.

For the evolving scenario, the appellant scored a 3 for the technical component, a 5 for the supervision component, and a 5 for the oral communication component. For the arriving scenario, the appellant scored a 5 for the technical component, a 4 for the supervision component, and a 4 for the oral communication component. The appellant challenges his scores for the supervision and oral communication components of the arriving scenario. As a result, the appellant's test material, video, and a listing of PCAs for the scenarios were reviewed.

The arriving scenario involved a report of fire on the first and second floor of a row home, where there were people squatting inside when the fire broke out. Question 3, the supervision question, indicated that as the candidate is evacuating other rowhomes on the block, one of his firefighters gets into a screaming argument with a resident who does not want to leave, and the firefighter attempts to perform a firefighter's carry with the resident. The question asks for actions to take now and back at the firehouse.

For the supervision component, the assessor noted that the candidate missed the opportunity to ensure the resident is okay. On appeal, the appellant states that he took down the residents information to follow up afterwards.

In reply, at the end of every scenario and prior to the questions, instructions state, "In responding to the questions, make sure your actions directly relate to the scenario. Do not assume or take for granted that general actions will contribute to

your score.” A review of the appellant’s presentation indicates that on scene he did not ensure the resident is okay after the fireman had attempted a fireman’s carry on the resident. Following up afterwards is not the same, and the appellant cannot receive credit for ensuring that the resident is okay on scene by “following up,” at some point later. The appellant missed this action as noted by the assessor and his score of 4 for this component is correct.

As to oral communication component for the arriving scenario, the assessor noted a minor weakness in non-verbal communication as he used a pen as a pointer throughout the presentation, causing a distraction. The appellant argues that his pen was used as a tracking tool so that he would not lose his place while reading.

In reply, a factor in oral communication is nonverbal communication. A weakness in this factor is defined as failing to use gestures effectively, thereby causing confusion or distractions, and failing to maintain eye contact with the camera when speaking. A review of the presentation indicates that the appellant used a pen as a pointer throughout the presentation, however, this did not significantly detract from the presentation. Accordingly, the appellant’s score for this component should be increased from 4 to 5.

CONCLUSION

A thorough review of the appellant’s submissions and the test materials indicates that, except for the oral communication component of the arriving scenario, the decision below is amply supported by the record, and the appellant has failed to meet his burden of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that the appellant’s score for the oral communication component of the arriving scenario be increased from 4 to 5, and the remainder of the appeal be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON
THE 12th DAY OF JUNE, 2019



Deirdré L. Webster Cobb
Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

Inquiries
and
Correspondence

Christopher S. Myers
Director
Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs
Civil Service Commission
Written Record Appeals Unit
P. O. Box 312
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0312

c: Mark Roth
Michael Johnson
Records Center